THE DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE IN CONTEXT

For more than 150 years, the US government has waged a sustained environmental war against the Sioux. Unable to defeat mounted warriors on the battlefield, the US army massacred buffalo herds in the 1860s-70s in order to starve the Sioux into submission. In violation of treaties, army officers led gold prospecting missions into the Black Hills in 1874. During the ensuing gold rush, miners murdered Sioux without penalty and contaminated streams with mercury. After seizing the Black Hills in 1877, the federal government dismembered the Great Sioux reservation into four smaller reservations in 1879, coerced native families into accepting 160-acre parcels, and then allotted “extra” agricultural lands to white settlers. During the mid-twentieth century, the Army Corps of Engineers constructed a series of dams on the Missouri river, flooding 200,000 acres of Standing Rock Reservation and destroying 90% of the remaining trees. Today, Energy Transfer Partners and the Dakota Access Pipeline threaten the drinkable water at Standing Rock with petrochemical contamination, and have bulldozed sacred cultural sites in the building process. For the Sioux, the Dakota Pipeline represents yet another threat in a long history of genocidal policies.

In the U.S., the average amount of oil spilled from pipelines annually tops 47k barrels. From July 2015-July 2016 North Dakota had 1,238 reported incidents of oil or oilfield wastewater spills. If the Dakota Access Pipeline leaked oil into the Missouri River, it could reach the Standing Rock Reservation’s principal drinking water intake pipe within hours.

Great Sioux/Oceti Sakowin territory, and reduction over time

- Great Sioux territory defined by 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty
- Land seized by U.S. govt. by the year 1868
- Land seized by 1877
- Land seized by 1889
- Land seized by 1910
- Current Sioux reservation territory
- Other neighboring Native American reservations

Moments of violence or injustice

- Injustice via water manipulation

1862: Dakota 38+2 hanged in Mankato; largest mass execution in U.S. history.
1863: Whitestone Hill Massacre.
1851 Treaty Camp

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